



Friday's speakers were billed as 'Kenny Brown and the Hawaiians — The New Economic Chiefs'.

Well with that sort of fanfare, great things were expected. And they didn't disappoint.

— Kenny Brown, the chairman of the board, that is the Ainamalu Corporation, was the delegation Rangatira. Kenny is also the president of the Mauna Lani Resort Inc. amongst other hats he wears.

— Kent Bowman, president of Davies Marine Agencies Inc/Kawaihae Terminals Inc.

— Dr Mitchell Eli, owner of the Aloha Chiropractic Center.

— Richard Hartman, general manager of the Auckland Sheraton Hotel.

— Charles Heen, president of his own interior design firm.

— George Henrickson, project director of Kuilima Development.

— George Kanahale, chairman of the board — Hawaii Entrepreneurship Training and Development Institute.

Like I said, the 'new economic chiefs' or 'big guns'.

It wasn't so much what they said but how they said it.

#### Cut and thrust

Some like George Henrickson spoke of being brought up by grandparents in an island community, not unlike the rural Maori. He spoke of having to painfully adjust to the European cut and thrust of society, sort of like squeezing into his first pair of shoes at the tender-foot age of six.

But George wasn't slow off the mark to realise he had to make his way in a competitive world. He said there was a great need to 'trust' in business and that's how he accounts for retaining his Hawaiian identity while at the same time competing in a commercial world.

For Charles Heen, the interior design artist, it was somewhat different. He told of being like Hugh Fletcher, in being born with 'a golden spoon in his

mouth. Just out of school, Charles was given a world education, courtesy of a legacy left by a close relative.

With it he travelled the world, attending places of learning and also inhaling the cosmopolitan spirit of differing cultures. He said it was quite normal for him to develop his eye for design and start making money in the marketplace.

Kent Bowman, the part-time comedian with a half Hawaiian-half European upbringing had only one wish as a young man, to go to sea.

#### Big league

And that's just what he did, but with one major difference from other sailors. Kent eventually joined forces with a marine agency supplying hardware to the trade and is now in the big league of sea-faring businessmen.

For him it's been a case of acquiring the skills along the way, but he says Hawaiians have a natural talent for organising people. It's an affinity he believes the Maori also has.

However the most intriguing part of the address was the openness of

delegation leader, Kenny Brown. He stressed the desire by Hawaiians to rediscover their heritage, pointing out that blood ties are now assuming some importance in being identified as being Hawaiian.

For himself he apologised for not being fluent in the Hawaiian tongue but said the cultural connection had come to him rather late in life. For his part now as a very successful businessman, he was endeavouring to encourage the retention of what native Hawaiian land and culture was left.

Later at various workshops at the conference, delegates had a chance to quiz the Hawaiians on the ups and downs of their individual success stories. What was evident was that while they might be prominent in the commercial world, the importance of retaining their identity hasn't escaped them.

#### No hindrance

They don't see the Maori culture as being any hindrance to commercial success but rather a plus factor in giving more meaning to work. For some of the Hawaiians, it was said, the realisation of that factor had come late in life. That's why they were particularly encouraged by the concept of distinct Maori business, embodying cultural values in a commercial base that gave more meaning and vitality to the work ethnic.

For conference people, it was all over on the Friday, despite a few still asking when the work was going to start. But for the Hawaiians, it was a breathing space before taking off to the Bay of Plenty on a tour of marae and horticulture expertise.

On the Saturday a busload of Hawaiians and Maori Affairs personnel travelled to Tauranga and were hosted at lunch at Pou Tu Terangi, a Te Puna marae. Among the elders was Turi Te Kani, who in his mihi spoke of the strong links between Maori and Hawaiian. He harked back to the legendary Hawaiiki where the Maori sailed from to settle in Aotearoa.

